

Missouri's Social Work Workforce-2014

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments.¹ In Missouri, the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, and Professional Registration, State Committee for Social Workers licenses four categories of social workers:

- 1) Licensed Bachelors Social Worker (LBSW) – has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from an accredited program and passing score on the required examination
- 2) Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) – has a Master's degree in Social Work from an accredited program and passing score on required examination.
- 3) Licensed Advanced Macro Social Worker (LASW) – has a Master's or Doctorate degree in Social Work, passing exam score, and three thousand hours of supervised advanced macro experience.
- 4) Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) – has a Master's or Doctorate degree in Social Work, passing exam score, and three thousand hours of supervised clinical experience.

Information on licensees is current as of 3/3/2014 and was obtained through the publicly reported records of the Committee for Social Workers.²

Overall

There are 6,260 total social workers licensed by Missouri. Of those with Missouri addresses, there are 42 LBSWs, 894 LMSWs, no LASWs and 4,328 LCSWs for a total of 5,264 licensed social workers. There are nearly 5 times as many LCSWs as there are in the other categories of licensed social workers combined. Missouri currently has a population to LCSW ratio of 1397:1.³

Progression of the Profession

The first licensing requirement for LCSWs in Missouri was passed in 1989. Subsequently, requirements for various levels of licensed social workers were added. In 2001, bachelor level (LBSW) was added and licenses for Master (LMSW) and Advanced Macro (LASW) were added in 2007. Since 2009 the total number of LCSWs has stayed relatively flat (5083 in 2009 vs. 5056 in 2013), albeit with wide fluctuations (Figure 1). In contrast, the total number of LMSWs has more than quadrupled since 2010 (Figure 2). Given the wide variation seen in total numbers of LCSWs and the rapid expansion in the total number of LMSWs, more thorough analysis and monitoring of trends and impacts in the profession could be warranted.

Looking at the total number of new LCSW and LMSW licensees suggests a consistent production of LCSWs, with a strong interest in the LMSW license (Figure 3). In the four year time period in which new licensee data is available for both LCSWs and LMSWs, the average number of new LMSW licensees (294) outpaces the average number of new LCSW licensees (238).

¹ International Federation of Social Workers, Definition of Social Work. Accessed March 6, 2014 at <http://ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work/>.

² Missouri Division of Professional Registration, *Social Workers*. Accessed March 3, 2014 at <http://pr.mo.gov/listings-cli.asp>

³ U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County Quick Facts*, 2013 population estimate. Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29000.html>

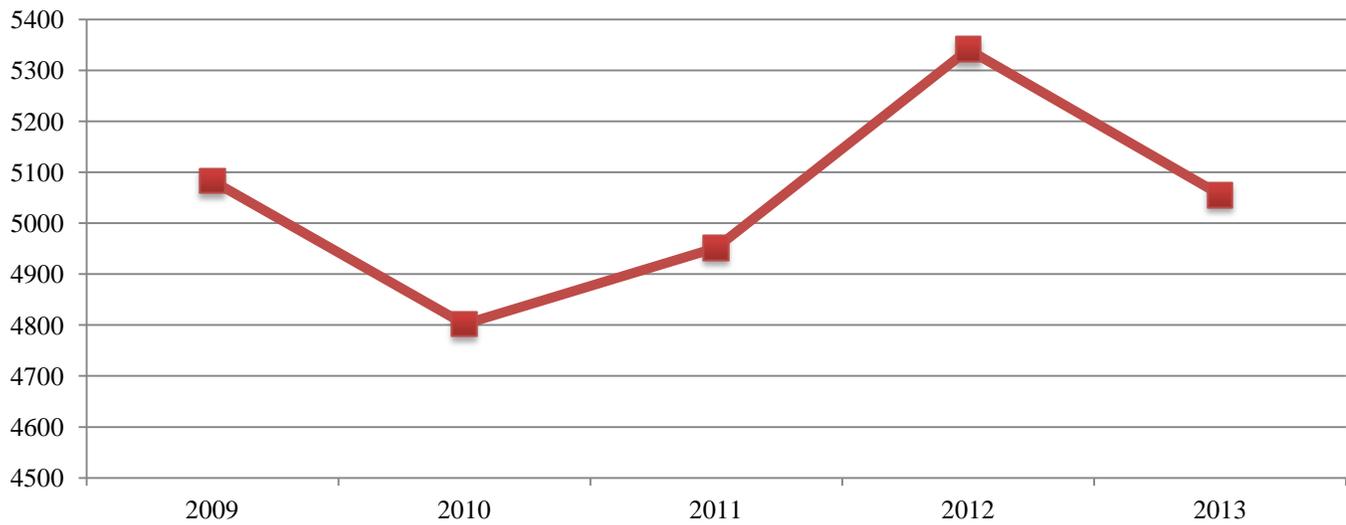


Figure 1. Total number of LCSWs licensed by Missouri, 2009-2013.⁴

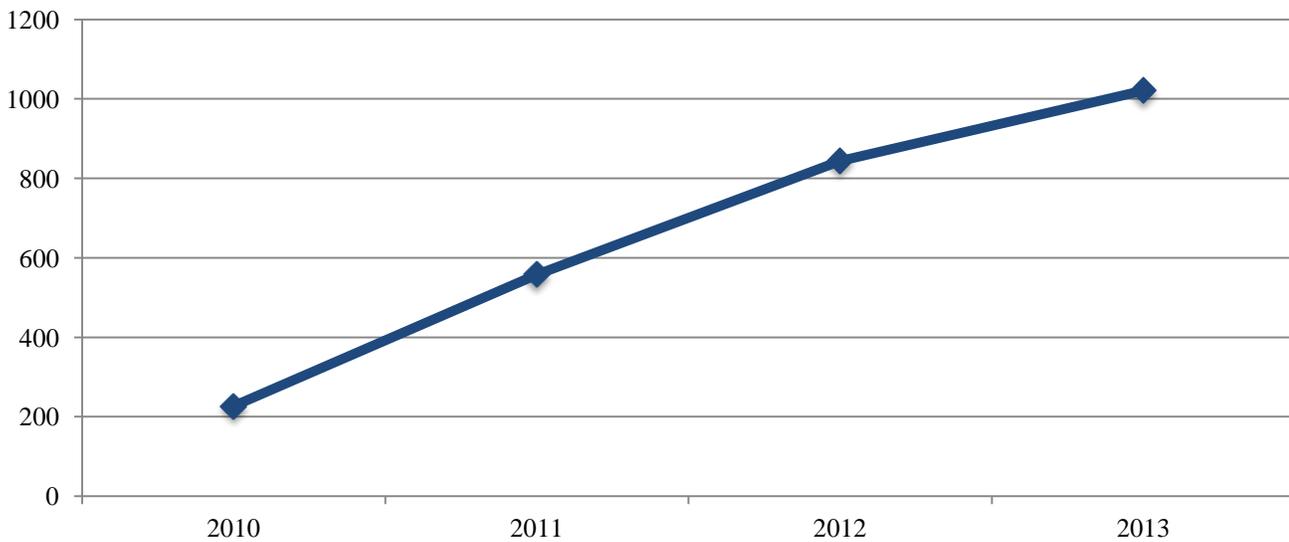


Figure 2. Total number of LMSWs licensed by Missouri, 2010-2013.⁴

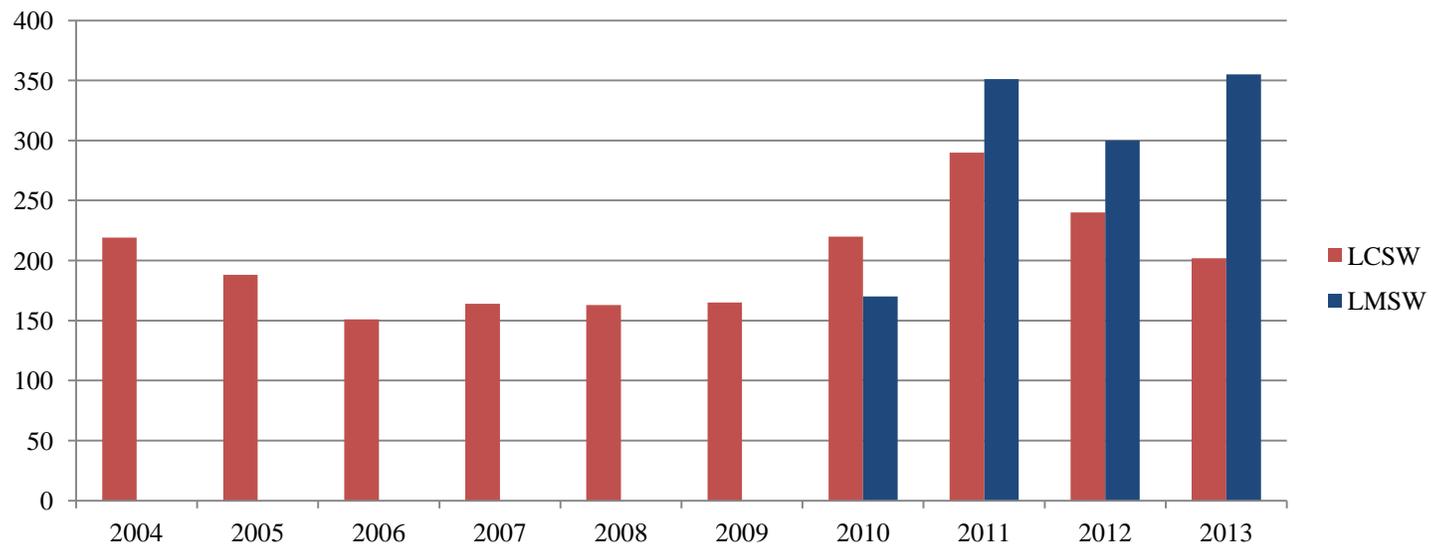


Figure 3. Total number of new LCSW and LMSW licensees per year, 2004-2013.⁴

⁴ Tom Reichard, Missouri Committee on Social Work, personal communication, March 2014.

Regional Variations

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides statistics for three specific types of social workers based upon the focus of their work: Mental Health and Substance Abuse social workers, Child, Family, and School social workers, and Healthcare social workers.⁵ As displayed in Figures 4, 5, 6, Missouri is among the states with the highest employment of all three categories of social workers.

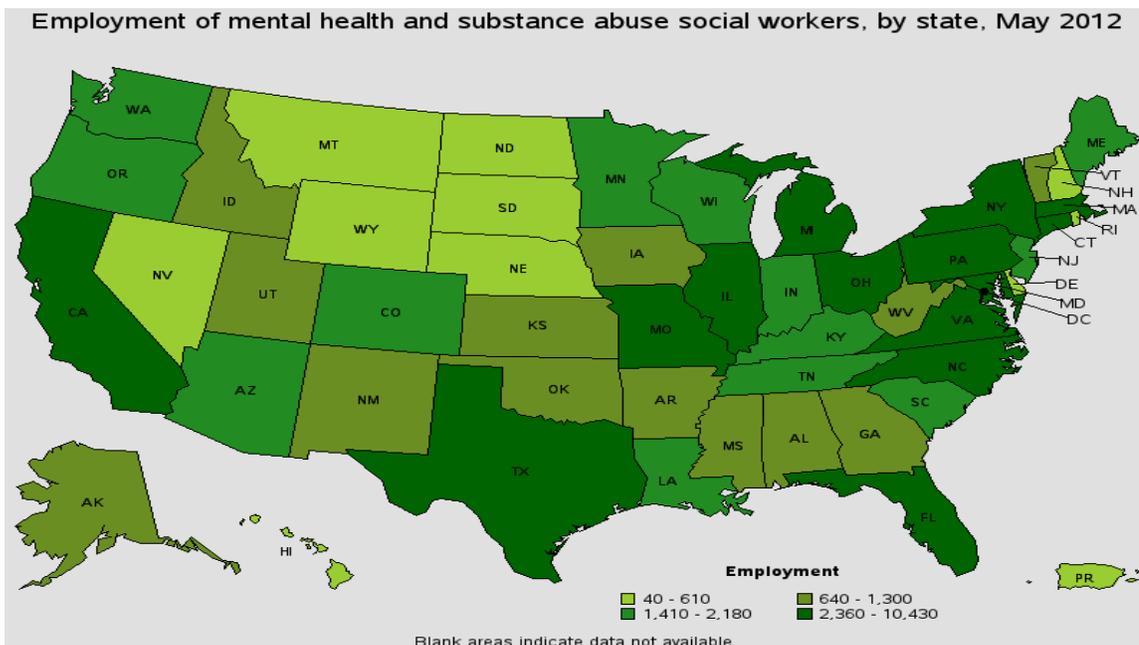


Figure 4. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211023.htm>.

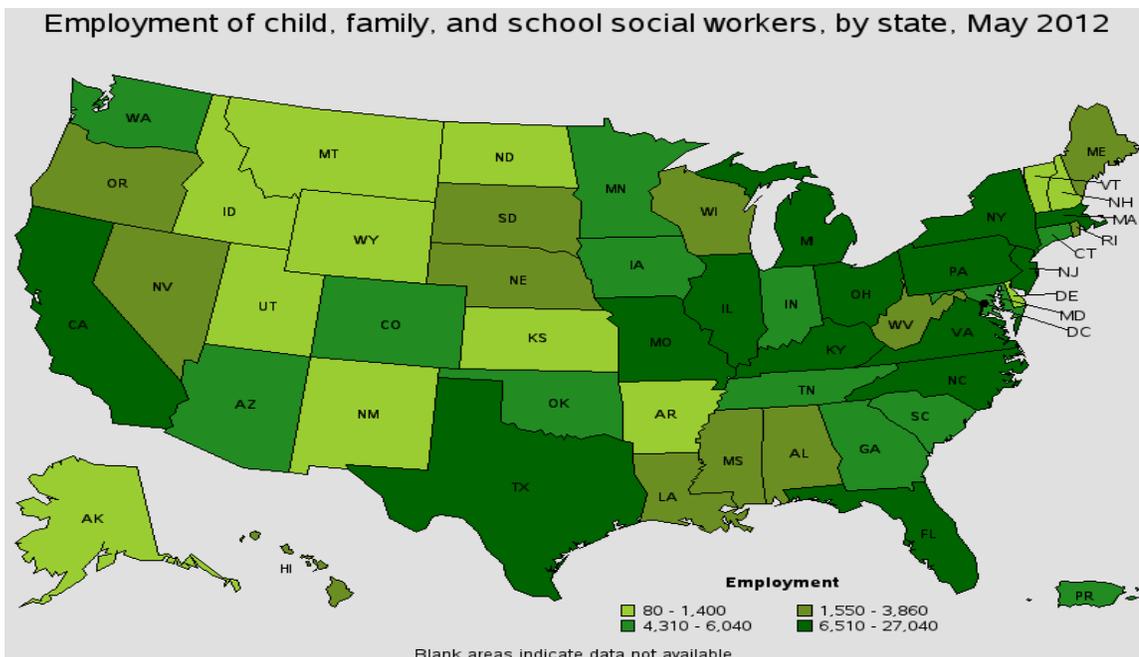


Figure 5. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211021.htm>.

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, Social Workers, Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://www.bls.gov/oooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>

Employment of healthcare social workers, by state, May 2012

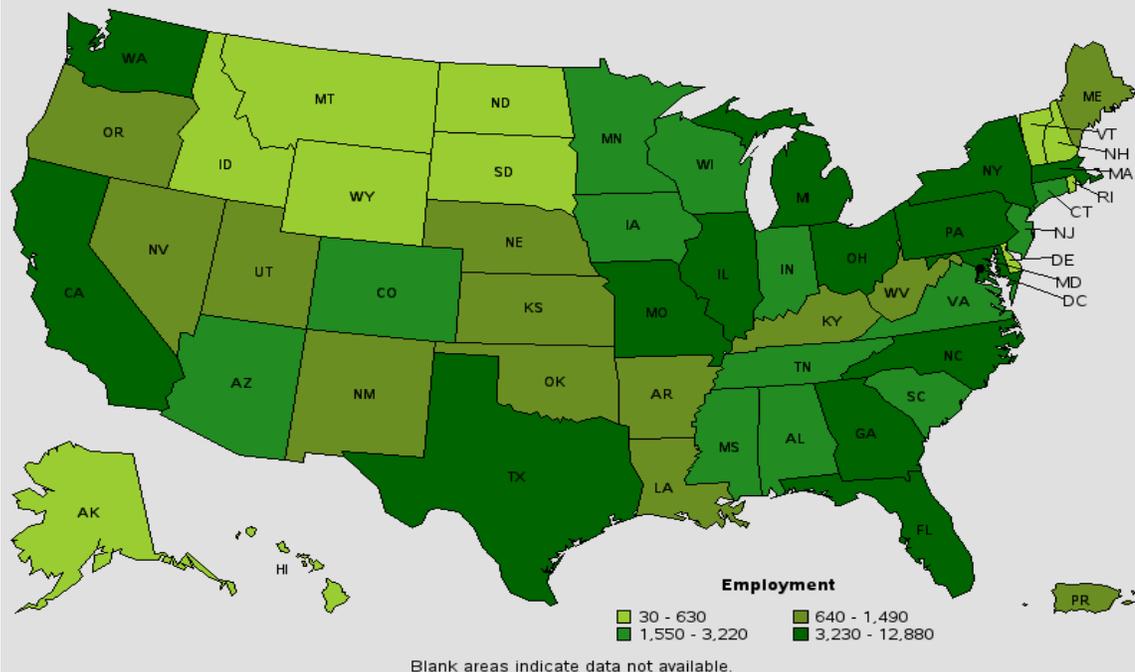


Figure 6. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211022.htm>.

BLS estimates that social workers held about 607,300 jobs in 2012. The industries employing the most mental health substance abuse social workers were:

Ambulatory health care services	27%
Social assistance	21%
Nursing and residential care facilities	15%
Hospitals, state, local and private	15%

Industries employing the most child, family, and school social workers were:

State and local government, excluding education and hospitals	41%
Health care and social assistance	36%
Educational services: state, local and private	15%
Religious, grant making, civic, professional, etc.	5%

Industries employing the most healthcare social workers were:

Hospitals; state, local, and private	31%
Ambulatory health care services	21%
Nursing and residential care facilities	15%
Social assistance	13%

Geographic Distribution of Missouri's LCSWs

Current locations of LCSWs in Missouri can be seen in Figure 7. The vast majority (82%) are located within urban areas of the state. Notably, 45% (1,945) of the total LCSWs with a Missouri address are concentrated in the St. Louis City/County area, giving this area a LCSW to population ratio of 678:1. In contrast, rural counties of Missouri have an average ratio of 2,950:1 (756 total).⁶

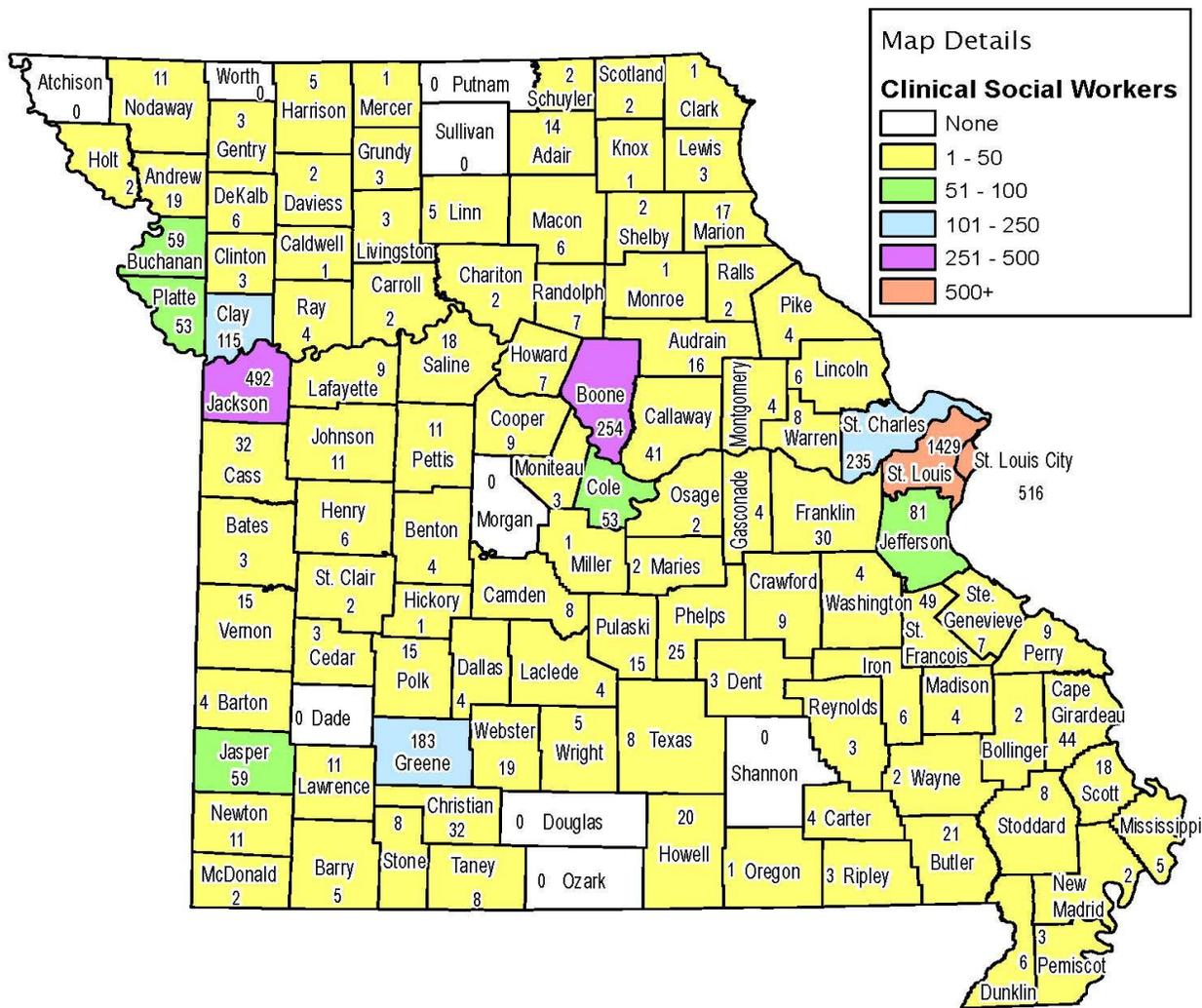


Figure 7. Geographic Distribution of LCSWs with a Missouri address.



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⁶ Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, *Health in Rural Missouri*. Accessed March 13, 2014 at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/ruralhealth/pdf/biennial2013.pdf>.